

Debunked: Response to GOP Memo

Numerous witnesses told Congress that President Trump pressed Ukraine to intervene in the upcoming U.S. elections by initiating and public announcing investigations into (1) his political opponent (Biden); and (2) debunked conspiracy theories regarding foreign interference in the 2016 election.

The American people will hear first-hand from these witnesses beginning this week.

In an internal memo released publicly today, the GOP makes four main arguments in support of the President. Below are facts that show their arguments are patently false.

FALSE: *The July 25 call summary “shows no conditionality or evidence of pressure.”*

FACT: The July 25 Call Shows Clear Evidence of Pressure and Conditionality

- President Trump’s own words in the July 25 call record are the best evidence of the President applying pressure on Ukraine to benefit his own personal political interests at the expense of the national interest.
- President Trump used his unrivaled power as the commander in chief of the most powerful country in the world to repeatedly press the leader of a foreign country to undertake politically-motivated investigations intended to benefit President Trump personally.
- As one U.S. official made clear, the Ukrainian President – recently elected to lead a country that is heavily dependent on U.S. military, economic, and diplomatic support to fight off Russian aggression – could only view this as a “demand” by the American president.
- President Trump, moreover, did not mention “corruption” once in the conversation, but instead repeatedly pressed Ukraine’s President to investigate “Biden.”
- Multiple U.S. officials have testified that the call, as well as meetings and discussions *before* and *after* the call, established a clear campaign of extortion: Ukraine’s President would not receive a White House meeting or vital military assistance until and unless Ukraine opened sham investigations that President Trump wanted.

FALSE: Ukrainian “President Zelensky and President Trump have both said there was no pressure on the call.”

FACT: Ukraine’s President Felt Pressured

- *Ahead* of the July 25 call, Ambassador Bill Taylor warned: “President Zelensky is sensitive about Ukraine being taken seriously, not merely as an instrument in Washington domestic, re-election politics.”
- Text messages and testimony by multiple witnesses show that both *ahead* of the July 25 call and for weeks *after* the July 25 call, U.S. officials pressured Ukraine to announce the investigations requested by Trump. Ukrainian advisors tried to push back, to no avail.
- Ukraine’s President was reportedly “crestfallen” following a September 1 meeting during which Vice President Pence did *not* commit to release he assistance.
- In early September 2019, Ukraine’s President was scheduled to appear on CNN and announce the investigations sought by Trump – yet more clear evidence of Trump’s pressure.
- The Ukrainian President knows that he must continue to deal with President Trump and cannot be expected to publicly acknowledge that President Trump has sought to pressure him to undertake politically-motivated investigations – the very type of corrupt investigations the Ukrainian President has promised to end in his country.

FALSE: “The Ukrainian government was not aware of the hold on U.S. assistance” during the July 25 call.

FACT: Ukraine Knew About the Hold on Security Assistance *Before* It Became Public

- Two U.S. officials testified that *Ukraine knew* of the hold on security assistance weeks before it became public.
- **Defense Department Official Laura Cooper:** “*I knew from my Kurt Volker conversations and also from sort of the alarm bells that were coming from Ambassador Taylor and his team that there were Ukrainians who knew about this.*”
- **State Department Official Katherine Croft:** “*I remember being very surprised at the effectiveness of my Ukrainian counterparts' diplomatic tradecraft, as in to say they found out very early on or much earlier than I expected them to.*”
- Croft also testified that she was “very surprised at the effectiveness of my Ukrainian counterparts’ diplomatic tradecraft, as in to say they found out very early on or much earlier than I expected them to,” but emphasized that the Ukrainian officials “had no interest in this information getting out into the public.”

FALSE: *The security assistance hold was lifted on September 11, 2019, so it ended up fine.*

FACT: Security Assistance Flowed Only After Congress Intervened

- The President did not lift the hold on security assistance until September 11 – after Congress announced an investigation and after the whistleblower’s complaint reached the White House.
- Security assistance “flowed” only because Congress passed a new law ensuring the held funds did not expire.
- An attempt to coerce a foreign leader to procure dirt on a domestic political opponent is no less offensive because it is discovered and thwarted.

FACT: Trump Continued to Withhold a White House Meeting

- On September 25, Ukraine’s president publicly said Trump had *not* provided a date for the long-promised White House visit.

FACT: Ukraine is *Currently* Following Trump’s Order in Reviewing Past Investigations

- On October 4, Ukraine’s prosecutor general said it was “reviewing” past investigations, including into the owner of Burisma.
- The prosecutor’s said he made the decision *after* he took office in August – meaning it occurred *after* the July 25 call between President Trump and Ukraine’s president.
- There is *no evidence of wrongdoing* by Vice President Biden or his son.